



Steven W. Troxler  
Commissioner

North Carolina Department of Agriculture  
and Consumer Services  
*Veterinary Division*

R. Douglas Meckes, DVM  
State Veterinarian

June 14, 2017

Regina Rowland Cooper  
Funny Farm Kitties  
81 Pine Street  
Concord, NC 28027

**NOTICE OF CIVIL PENALTY**

**RE: CIVIL PENALTY ASSESSMENT FOR VIOLATION OF  
N.C. GENERAL STATUTE §19A-26**

AWS-CP-2017-6

Animal Shelter: Regina Rowland Cooper, Individually and DBA Funny Farm Kitties

Dear Ms. Cooper:

Pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 19A-40, I am issuing this notice to you that Regina Rowland Cooper, Individually and DBA Funny Farm Kitties, is hereby assessed a civil penalty of \$2,000.00 as provided in the enclosed Notice of Violation and Assessment of Civil Penalty.

With regard to the civil penalty, within 60 days from the date of receipt, you must do one of the following:

1. Pay the civil penalty assessment; or
2. File a written petition for a contested case hearing with the N.C. Office of Administrative Hearings to appeal the penalty assessment.

Pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 150B-22, either party to a dispute may initiate informal settlement negotiations at any time. To negotiate a settlement of this assessment, you may present your offer to me. I can be contacted by telephone at (919) 707-3280. Settlement offers do not extend the 60-day deadline for payment or filing of a contested case petition.

Additional information about your options is provided below:

### PAYMENT

To pay the penalty, please send your payment by check or money order made payable to the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to:

North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services  
Dr. Patricia Norris  
Director, Animal Welfare Section  
1030 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1030

### APPEAL

If you file a contested case petition, it must be in writing and in the form prescribed by N.C. Gen. Stat. § 150B-23. The petition must be accompanied by a filing fee of twenty dollars (\$20.00) payable to the N.C. Office of Administrative Hearings. Should you have any questions about what the fee would be for your case, please contact the OAH Clerk's Office at 919-431-3000. Payment can be made by cash, money order, certified check or check drawn on an attorney's trust account. Make checks payable to: Office of Administrative Hearings. File the petition and one copy with:

Office of Administrative Hearings  
6714 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-6714

Any questions about filing a petition may be directed to the Clerk of OAH by telephone at 919-431-3000. You must serve NCDA&CS by mailing a copy of the petition to:

Ms. Tina Hlabse  
North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services  
Registered Agent and General Counsel  
1001 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1001

Payment of the penalty will not foreclose further enforcement action against you for any new violation. If the violations which resulted in the assessment are of a continuing nature, NCDA&CS reserves the right to assess additional civil penalties in the future or take other enforcement action against you.

Your attention to this matter is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Patricia Norris', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Patricia Norris, DVM, MS  
Director, Animal Welfare Section

Attachment: Notice of Violations, Assessment of Civil Penalty

cc: R. Douglas Meckes, DVM, NCDA&CS  
Ms. Tina Hlabse, General Counsel, NCDA&CS  
Mr. Joe Reardon, Assistant Commissioner, NCDA&CS  
Christopher McLennan, Assistant Attorney General

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF WAKE

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF  
AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES,  
VETERINARY DIVISION

IN THE MATTER OF  
REGINA ROWLAND COOPER,  
INDIVIDUALLY AND DBA  
FUNNY FARM KITTIES

) NOTICE OF VIOLATION,  
) ASSESSMENT OF CIVIL  
) PENALTY  
)  
) For Violation Of:  
) N.C. General Statute §19A-26  
)

Acting pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. §19A-40, Dr. Patricia Norris, Director of the Animal Welfare Section ("AWS"), Veterinary Division, North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) makes the following:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. On March 1, 2016, AWS issued Regina Rowland Cooper a Notice of Warning for operating Funny Farm Kitties (the "shelter"), located at 81 Pine Street, Concord, North Carolina, as an animal shelter without a valid certificate of registration to do so in violation of N.C. General Statute §19A-26.
2. The March 1, 2016 Notice of Warning provided written notice to Regina Rowland Cooper that the shelter was required to submit an application for registration as an animal shelter. Furthermore, the Notice directed the shelter to immediately cease operation as a shelter until such registration had been issued by AWS.
3. On March 9, 2017, AWS Animal Health Technician Jay Blatche ("Inspector Blatche") inspected the shelter located at 81 Pine Street, Concord, North Carolina. The shelter was housing more than 35 animals identified as shelter animals on the premises. The shelter also admitted to soliciting donations to fund the care of the animals at the shelter. In addition, the shelter admitted to rescuing cats from community shelters and accepting stray, homeless, abandoned, and unwanted animals from the public.
4. At the time of the March 9, 2017 inspection, Regina Rowland Cooper, the operator of the shelter, conveyed to Inspector Blatche that she had no intention of applying for registration as an animal shelter.
5. On March 16, 2017, Dr. Patricia Norris, issued a Civil Penalty of \$1,000.00 to Regina Rowland Cooper, Individually and DBA Funny Farm Kitties for violation of N.C. General Statute §19A-26.
6. Regina Rowland Cooper failed to appeal this assessed Civil Penalty of \$1,000.00
7. On June 7, 2017, Inspector Blatche and AWS Animal Health Technician Christie Shore ("Inspector Shore") inspected the shelter located at 81 Pine Street, Concord, North Carolina. Ms. Cooper relayed to the Inspectors that she had 37 shelter cats including 10 young kittens. She indicated that 1 litter of the kittens had been born on the premises and that she had recently accepted the second litter of kittens from a cat rescue.

8. During the June 7, 2017 inspection, Inspectors Blatche and Shore noted several ill cats. When asked to produce the records of veterinary care for these animals and in-date rabies vaccination certificates, Ms. Cooper was unable to do so.

9. During the June 7, 2017 inspection, Ms. Cooper agreed to meet with Inspector Blatche at 2:00 PM on June 12, 2017 to review the veterinary care records and rabies certificates. Inspector Blatche arrived at the shelter as previously arranged, and although he heard people inside the facility, no one answered his knock and Ms. Cooper did not return the phone call or messages left by Inspector Blatche.

## CONCLUSIONS

As a result of this investigation, AWS finds that, as of June 7, 2017, after receiving a Civil Penalty on March 16, 2017 and a Notice of Warning on March 1, 2016, Regina Rowland Cooper, individually and DBA Funny Farm Kitties, continues to operate as an animal shelter as defined in N.C. Gen. Stat. § 19A-23(5) without a valid certificate of registration to do so. Therefore, AWS finds that the shelter, either by act or omission, continues to violate N.C. General Statute §19A-26.

AWS hereby notifies Regina Rowland Cooper, individually and DBA Funny Farm Kitties, that any future or continued violation of this General Statute may result in the assessment of additional civil penalties pursuant to N.C. General Statute §19A-40.

AWS again directs to Regina Rowland Cooper, individually and DBA Funny Farm Kitties, to immediately cease operation as a shelter until registration as an animal shelter has been issued by AWS to this facility.

(See Appendix for text of cited General Statutes)

## CIVIL PENALTIES

In determining the amount of the civil penalty, I have considered the degree and extent of harm caused by the violations listed above as required by N.C. General Statute § 19A-40.

Accordingly, Regina Rowland Cooper, individually and DBA Funny Farm Kitties, is hereby assessed a civil penalty of \$2,000.00 for violation of N.C. General Statute §19A-26.

\$2,000.00 TOTAL AMOUNT ASSESSED

June 14, 2017  
Date

Dr. Patricia Norris  
Dr. Patricia Norris  
Director, Animal Welfare Section  
North Carolina Department of  
Agriculture & Consumer Services

## Appendix

### Referenced Statutes

#### **§ 19A-23. Definitions.**

For the purposes of this Article, the following terms, when used in the Article or the rules or orders made pursuant thereto, shall be construed respectively to mean:

(5) "Animal shelter" means a facility which is used to house or contain seized, stray, homeless, quarantined, abandoned or unwanted animals and which is under contract with, owned, operated, or maintained by a county, city, town, or other municipality, or by a duly incorporated humane society, animal welfare society, society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, or other nonprofit organization devoted to the welfare, protection, rehabilitation, or humane treatment of animals.

#### **§ 19A-26. Certificate of registration required for animal shelter.**

No person shall operate an animal shelter unless a certificate of registration for such animal shelter shall have been granted by the Director. Application for such certificate shall be made in the manner provided by the Director. No fee shall be required for such application or certificate. Certificates of registration shall be valid for a period of one year or until suspended or revoked and may be renewed for like periods upon application in the manner provided.

#### **§19A-40. Civil Penalties.**

The Director may assess a civil penalty of not more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000) against any person who violates a provision of this Article or any rule promulgated thereunder. In determining the amount of the penalty, the Director shall consider the degree and extent of harm caused by the violation. The clear proceeds of civil penalties assessed pursuant to this section shall be remitted to the Civil Penalty and Forfeiture Fund in accordance with G.S. 115C-457.2.